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MARVEL



THREE COMICS PRESENTS

EXCALIBUR

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FEATURING:

PHOENIX

vs.
DARK PHOENIX!

MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS™

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EXCALIBUR

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"KEEP THE FIRE BURNING" — PART 6 OF 8

Have you ever found yourself alone with nothing to do? Next time, count your blessings. You might just be better off that way. **Rachel Summers** certainly was, because now it's **Phoenix vs. Phoenix**. The fireworks have just begun!

"OPPONENTS" — PART 24 OF 25

The **Black Panther** is pursued by mercenaries and Doberman pinchers through the wooded grounds of **Anton Preterius'** estate. He has nearly eluded them when he steps into a vicious bear trap. Now, the great cat is at their mercy!

"ENCOUNTER IN THE ALLEY OF DEATH"

For the past months, **Patsy Walker** has maintained a low profile in the city. Nevertheless, she is always ready to strike if the powers of **Helicat** are needed. Now, under the shroud of darkness, she uncovers the first terrible trace of a conspiracy that threatens the lives of thousands...

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EXCALIBUR

FEATURING

PHOENIX

INCREDIBLE!

PHOENIX, WHAT
HAVE YOU GOTTEN
YOURSELF INTO?

NOTHING BUT
FLAMES AS FAR
AS THE EYE
CAN SEE!

EVERYTHING
LOOKS THE SAME
NO MATTER WHICH
WAY I TURN!

HAVING A WILD
WEEKEND PART 6

Keep the Fire
Alive

WMM... MAYBE I
WAS A LITTLE
HASTY!

THERE'S
SOMETHING
OVER THERE--
SOMETHING
THAT LOOKS
JUST LIKE
ME!

I KNOW A GIRL'S
SUPPOSED TO LOOK
HER BEST, BUT USUALLY
I PREFER TO LEAVE
THE MIRRORS
AT HOME.

STILL, FOR
WHATEVER
REASON, THAT'S
ALL IT IS--JUST
AN IMAGE
REFLECTING WHAT'S
HAPPENING TO ME!

OH,
MY...

NO!
NO!

HOW HORRIBLE! IT'S
LIKE SOMEONE
WANTED ME TO
WITNESS MY OWN
DEATH-- AND A
RATHER ORGUESOME
ONE AT THAT!

GONE--













PANTHER QUEST

"The last step taken found your heft
Decidedly upon the left.
One more would throw you on the right.
Another still—you see your plight.
You call this thinking, but it's walking.

From Robert Frost's poem,
"To A Thinker" from *The Poetry of Robert Frost*,
Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Publishers

STARRING: THE BLACK PANTHER
PART XXIX

OPPONENTS

HE STRANGLES THE SCREAM EXPLODING IN HIS HEAD --

-- A SHRIEK OF ANGUISH
CHOKING IN HIS THROAT.

THE PAIN IS SO
OVERWHELMING
HE IS BLIND TO
THE NIGHT.

IT TAKES VALUABLE
SECONDS BEFORE HE
CAN COMPREHEND
WHAT HAS HAPPENED.

CAUGHT IN A
CAMOUFLAGED
ANIMAL TRAP.

DIRT-SMEARED
METAL TEETH
PUNCTURING
HIS ANKLE!



IF THE SERRATED EDGES OF THE CLAW HAD SMATTERED BONE, HE IS FINISHED.

NO MORE GREAT CAT LOPIING WITH NATURAL GANCE AND SPEED.



ONE OF THE DOBERMAN PINSCHERS IS STILL IN PURSUIT. AT BEST, THE CREATURE IS LITTLE MORE THAN A MINUTE AND A HALF BEHIND HIM. IT HAS HIS SCENT, IT'S CLOSING IN FAST.

HE TRIES TO SHUT OUT THE PERMAL PAIN, SEP IF HE CAN ASCERTAIN THE AMOUNT OF DAMAGE.

GRRRR



ARE THE TARSAL BONES IN THE ANKLE CRACKED?



EVEN IF HE COULD FREE HIMSELF OF THE TRAP, NO SMALL FEET IN ITSELF.



-- IF THOSE SMALL BONES ARE SMATTERED --

-- OR IF THE ACHILLES TENDON IS SEVERED --

-- HE WOULD BE LUCKY TO MOBBLE PITIFULLY.



CERTAINLY IN SUCH A CONDITION, HE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO OUT-RUN THE DOBERMAN.



THE INSIDE OF HIS BOOT IS WET WITH BLOOD.

HIS HEEL SQUEEZES DOWN ON A WARM, VISCOUS POOL THAT SPREADS OUT INSIDEROUSLY UNDER HIS FOOT.

HIS VISION CLEARS AND DIMS WITH EACH PAIN-PULSE.

NOW HE IS AWARE THAT THE BOOT-LEATHER HAS GIVEN HIM SOME PROTECTION FROM THE JAGGED, METALLIC, UNFORGIVING TEETH!

HOW MANY POUNDS PRESSURE ON THIS TRAP?

HOW MUCH FORCE REQUIRED TO RELEASE IT?

BETWEEN ONE OF THE PAIN-WAVELETS THE GREAT CAT SENSES THE DOBERMAN AGAIN.

30 SECONDS HAVE PASSED.

THE CREATURE WILL REACH HIM IN APPROXIMATELY 1 MINUTE!

PRY YOUR FINGERS BETWEEN THIS SHARP V'S OF METAL TEETH.

GET A GRIP ON THE BLOOD-SUCK CLAMPS!

HE CAN SMELL THE ANIMAL'S FRENZY NOW.

30 SECONDS AWAY AT BEST!

FINGERS PIERCING BLOOD-FILLED FLESH PENETRATIONS--

--SO MEAT-PULP SOFT.

DON'T THINK ABOUT THAT.

FINGERS SLIPPING--

KREE

SKRISH

--IN HIS BLOOD!

HE SOBS,
ONCE--

NOW HE CAN HEAR THE
DOBERMAN BREATHING
EAGERLY.

--AN INVOLUNTARY
EXPRESSION OF
MISERY.

PAWS, LIGHT TREAD
ON DINE NEEDLES.
35 SECONDS LEFT
MAXIMUM!

NO TIME TO FEEL SORRY
FOR YOURSELF. LACERATED
FINGERBIDS AREN'T ANY
EXCUSE THIS BEAST WILL
LISTEN TO AND ACCEPT.

IT WILL HURTLE FROM THE
SHADOWS, DASHES WITH
FURIOUS SPEED--

--AND IT
WILL NOT
SLOW
DOWN.

IT WILL LEAD
AT HIM WITH
ALL THAT TERRI-
BLE POWER
BEHIND IT.

STRAINING.
SNARLING.

THE SPRING
TENSION OF THE
TRAP RESISTS.
STEEL CREAKS,
THEN DROPS
BLOOD INSIDE
HIS FINGERS
WHERE THEY
BEND AND PULL.

IF YOU CAN MANAGE
TO FREE TWO METAL
TEETH FROM
RUINED FLESH,
THAT'S ALL
YOU NEED
TO DO.

OH, IS
THAT
ALL?
EASER
SAID.

AND HE HAD
THOUGHT TIN
ROOFING BARN-
ING UP HIS LEG
HAD HURT.

HE HAD THOUGHT
IT COULDN'T GET
WORSE THAN FIRE
SEARING ACROSS
HIS BACK.

HE WAS
WRONG!

FINGERS SLIPPING
AGAIN!

NO!

PULL! CAN'T!

IF THE TRAP
KNOCKS HIM
ONCE MORE,
THERE WILL
NOT BE TIME
FOR ANOTHER
RELEASE
ATTEMPT.

SO CLOSE TO
HEAR! ARE YOU
QUITTING WHEN
YOU HAVE COME
SO NEAR?

HE HAS HEARD IT CLAIMED
SOME ANIMALS CHEW
LEG OFF AS A PRICE FOR
FREEDOM. THE DOBERMAN
WON'T STRIKE
FOR THE LEG.

THE TRAP REFUSES TO YIELD.
IF YOU'RE GIVING UP,
ADMIT IT!

YOUR MOTHER IS
WAITING. TELL
HER YOU FAILED!

"COME TO SUPPER,
SON. PLAY-TIME'S
OVER!"

PULL FREE!
THERE'S
ENOUGH
GIVE.

A TINY
HORRIBLE
SOUND AS
THE METAL
TEETH
SCRAPE
DOWN THE
SIDE OF
HIS BOOT.

LOST THE GRID! DOESN'T
MATTER! FLEWING
GOUGED IN HIS
HEEL--

SHAP
-- BUT HE IS
STILL FREE!

AND THEN THE CREATURE
HITS HIM SO HARD AND
FAST AND FULL OF
MURDEROUS MOVEMENT.

SINEWY MUSCLES RIBBLING
LIQUIDLY UNDER TIGHT LINGS.

RRRRGGH

SLAMMING INTO THE WOODED
PINE-NEEDLE CANOPY.

TINY, RUST COLORED SILVER-
DAGGERS STICKING HIS BACK--

-- SPLINTERS
IN HIS RAW
BURNS.

DON'T TRY TO STAND,
CROUCH! NEED TO SEE IF
THE ANKLE WILL RESPOND
TO THE DEMANDS OF
QUICK MANEUVERS.

THE DOBERMAN HAS
BEEN TRAINED TO FEAR
THE SOFT THROAT GRAB--

-- RIP TRACHEA, ESOPHAGUS,
AND JUGULAR VEIN TO
TATTERED, USELESS RIBBONS!

IT CAN
DO SO
WITH
ONE
LUNGE!

HE MOVES WITH THE GREAT CAT'S SUPERB SPEED.
HIS THUMBS GRABbing UNDER SOFT FUR OF CHIN—

--HIS FINGERS PRESSING FAST RUBBERY
PINK AND BLACK GUMS--

--TO SALIVA
SLICK INCISORS!

LISTEN TO THAT RUCKUS! DOG'S GOT HIM SURE!

BETCHA THAT DOBE'S MAKIN'
TENDER VITTLES OUTTA HIM!

IT'S BREATH
GUSHES OUT
INTO HIS FACE,
A SMALL HARSH
WITH DECAY.

SOMETHING
ROTTING
BETWEEN
THE TEETH.

MAN, I DON'T KNOW IF I WANT
TO SEE WHAT'S LEFT OF HIM. WE'RE
TALKING CHOPPED LIVER HERE.

YOU SEEN WORSE,
YOU DONE WORSE.

YOU WAS WITH ME,
YOU SHOULD KNOW.

YEAH, BUT YOU GET OFF
ON ALL THAT BLOOD AND
GUTS STUFF!

YOU NEVER HEARD ME
SAY DIFFERENT--GETS MY
JUICES GOIN'.

UNDER THE TONGUE,
HIS TORN FINGERS
BATHE IN A FERID,
FROTTHING POOL
OF SPIT.

DRIPPING--

--AS IF IN
ANTICIPATION
OF THE TASTE
OF HIS FLESH.

HE LOSES
THE GREAT
CAT!

LOSES THE GREAT
CAT TO FEAR OF
THIS BEAST WHOSE
SINGULAR COMMIT-
MENT IS HIS DEATH.

FEAR STEALS THE
INSTINCT AND
ABILITY OF THE
GREAT CAT FROM
HIM!

GRRRRRRR
RRAAGHH

WITHOUT THE GREAT CAT, HE IS
MERELY A MAN WHO FEELS CHEATED.

HIS FREEDOM AND
SENSE OF TRIUMPH
SNATCHED SO
VICIOUSLY AWAY
IT IS UNFAIR.

FEEL SORRY
FOR YOURSELF,
AND YOU ARE
DEAD! IT
ENDS HERE!

YOU WON'T EVEN KNOW WHEN GORE OR HIS
MERCENARIES DISCOVER YOUR BODY.

A WHISPER OF THE GREAT
CAT TRACES THROUGH
HIS CRANIAL NERVES.

A SIGN OF THE GREAT CAT CARESSES HIS CEREBELLUM,
AND THE WHISPERS AND SIGNS DIMINISH THE FEAR.

DON'T GIVE IN TO
THE FEAR, LET IT
BE A PART OF YOU.

IT HAS
TO BE
A PART
OF YOU.

FEAR CAN KEEP
YOU CAUTIOUS,
KEEP YOU ALERT,
BUT IT MUST
NOT DOMINATE
AND CANCEL
ACTION.

THE CALF
MUSCLES
PROTEST,
AND HIS
ANKLE
SPURTS
FRESH
BLOOD
BUT HOLDS
THE WEIGHT.

--UNTIL
IT IS
GONE.

USE THE TRAP!
GET AROUND OF
THE ANCHOR
CHAIN.

NOT THAT WAY, STUPID!
ANY IDOT CAN TELL THE
NOISE'S COMING FROM
THIS DIRECTION.

AIN'T WE SPEAKING
POLITE, YOU AFRAID OF
CENSORS OR SOME-
THING. NORMALLY YOU
CALL ME #7742.

ARGH!
YOU LEP
ME INTO
THORNS!

THE
TRAP IS NOT
PART
OF THE LAND--

-- AND
MUST
YIELD.

THE TRAP BASE YANKS FREE OF THE GROUND SO ABRUPTLY HIS CAT'S NATURAL BALANCE IS NEARLY LOST.

A QUICK STEADYING SPREAD OF FEET TO KEEP HIMSELF ERECT.

HE NOTES WITH SATISFACTION, THAT THOUGH THE BLOOD IS NOW LIKE COOLING GELATIN WITHIN HIS BOOT, HIS ANKLE CAN BEAR THE STRAIN. THE BONES AND LIGAMENTS ARE INTACT!

THE GREAT CAT IS WITH HIM FULLY, RACING AS FAST AS HIS PULSE, SCREAMING THAT THE DOBERMAN HAS MADE ITS DEMONIC DEATH LEAP!

HE WHIRLS, TRUSTING THE GREAT CAT'S KEEN EXACTITUDE IN SENSING ITS OPPONENT'S WHEREABOUT AT ANY GIVEN SECOND.

SPLUTSCH

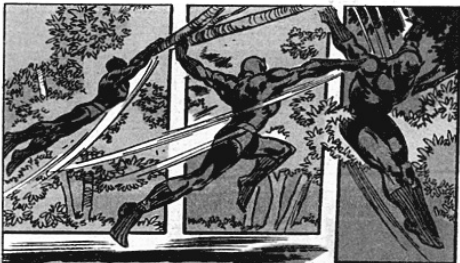
A SECOND DOG TO DIE ON WHAT WILL MOST LIKELY BE HIS LAST NIGHT IN THIS COUNTRY.

HE DOES NOT REGRET THE DEATH OF THIS ANIMAL. IT WAS TRAINED TO KILL, AND IT WOULD HAVE KILLED HIM.

SOUNDS LIKE IT'S OVER.

'CEPT FOR THE LEFT-OVERS.

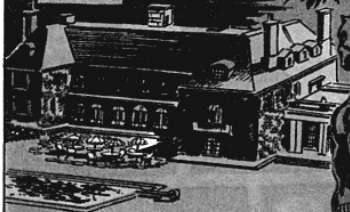




THE MANSION DOMINATES ITS SURROUNDINGS, AS IT HAS DONE FOR MOST OF THE 20TH CENTURY.

IT STANDS WIST AND IMPOSING AGAINST THE NIGHT SKY, FAINT DRUMS OF LIGHTENING THE HORIZON.

THE MANSION FLASHES MANY REPRESENTATIONS BEYOND ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN IN THAT FIRST IMPOSING VIEW OF IT UP CLOSE.



IT AMPLIFIES THE DISPARITY BETWEEN THE WORKERS IN THE BLACK TOWNSHIPS SCATTERED ABOUT SOUTH JARVIS'S CITY AND THE RULING MEMBERS OF THE WHITE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY AND THE WHITE CONSTITUENCY THEY REPRESENT.



IT IS ALSO A MANIFEST SYMBOL OF A WAY OF LIFE, IMPOSED AS LAW, NOT CENTURIES OLD, BUT STARTED A MERE 40 YEARS AGO. THE FIRST STATUTES OF APARTHEID ARE NEWER THAN THE MANSION ITSELF, YET ITS DIRECTIVES STUBBORNLY SWEAR SUCH PLACES WILL ENDURE.

1948, THE NATIONAL PARTY CELEBRATED ELECTORAL VICTORY, A HOORLA CULMINATING IN WHITE SOUTH AFRICAN LEGISLATURE. THE RACE CLASSIFICATION ACT, THE MIXED MARRIAGES ACT AND THE GROUP AREAS ACT.



HARD TO BELIEVE SUCH RESTRICTION GIVEN POLITICAL LEGALITY ONLY FOUR DECADES AGO. MAY YOU STAND MAGNIFICENT ESTATE, AS TESTAMENT TO THIS ASSEMBLY'S FORESIGHT TO KEEP SUCH HIGH STANDARD OF LIVING POSSIBLE.



FOR T'CHALLA, THE MANSION REPEALS SENDS A PRISON--



--A PLACE WHERE HIS MOTHER MAY HAVE SOMEHOW FOR SOME REASON HE STILL CAN NOT FORGIVEN, BEEN LEFT FROM HIM SINCE HE WAS A YOUNG CHILD.



HE WILL ENTER THIS MANSION--

--SYMBOL--

--PRISON--

--AND TRY TO DISCOVER THE SECRETS ITS EXTERIOR CONCEALS.



NOISES FROM HIS OBJECTIVE, THE TERRANCE.



VOYEUR TO AN EMOTIONAL TABLEAU.

GET BACK INSIDE!

DO YOU WANT TO GET YOURSELF KILLED?

AFTER ALL I HAVE BEEN THROUGH... ALL I HAVE RISKED TO KEEP YOU--

--DO YOU THINK I WOULD TAKE THE CHANCE A STRAY BULLET MIGHT STEAL YOU FROM ME--



HE'S OUT THERE.

CLOSE.

YOU DON'T KNOW THAT



SLAM



A SHADOW LIKE A BARRIER.

AN OPORTUNIST'S SHADOW.

GORE APPEARS,
STEPPING SLOW
AND PURPOSEFUL.

NO ELUSIVE
MOVEMENT.

NO HEART-STOPPING
ATTACK.

GORE'S PRESENCE DOES NOT
SURPRISE HIM.

SEEING HIM, T'CHALLA REALIZES
IT WAS ALMOST INEVITABLE
THAT GORE WOULD POSITION
HIMSELF NEAR THE NUCLEUS OF
EVENTS--

--AND
THAT
CENTER
WOULD
BE WHERE
EVER HIS
MOTHER
WAS.

THE WOMAN ON
THE ROOF
WAS SO CLOSE.

IF THEY WERE GOING TO
MEET AS OPPONENTS,
GORE WOULD MAKE SURE
HE HAD TO FIGHT HIS
WAY TO HER--

THAT
WAS HIS
MOTHER
UP THERE!

--AND
HIM!

PROVE HE WAS A WORTHY OPPONENT.

DIDN'T THINK YOU'D MAKE IT THIS
FAR. THE INTEGRITY OF THIS
PERIMETER WAS TOP-NOTCH.

YOU DO LOOK
THE WORSE FOR
THE WEAR 'N TEAR,
BUT MAYBE YOU
ARE SOME KIND
OF GREAT
OR TERRIBLE
CAT.

BUT GREAT CATS...
THEY DIE. THEY
HAD THEIR DAY,
BUT NOW...
TODAY--

SNIT

RRRIP



GUY WHO DOESN'T EVEN RECOGNIZE OR LAUGH AT A GOOD DAFFY DUCK IMPRESSION.

-- DESERVES TO BECOME SPARE BODY PARTS.

PERSONALLY YOU WANT THE TRUTH, I DO A BETTER ELMER FUDG--

-- BUT IT LOOKS LIKE YOU AIN'T GONNA BE ALIVE LONG ENOUGH TO HEAR IT.



BUT THEN, THE STRUGGLE FOR A SHARING OF POWER AND EQUALITY... AND AN END TO SANCTIONED PERSECUTION... NONE OF THAT HAS EVER MEANT ANYTHING TO YOU!

YOU USE THE SITUATION TO SATISFY YOUR TALENT FOR KILLING.

GORE IS UNBETTERINGLY ADILE FOR A MAN HIS SIZE. USES HIS HEAVIER WEIGHT TO MAXIMUM ADVANTAGE.

THE INTERLOCKED BODIES CHANGE POSITION, AND THE GREAT CAT IS PINNED. THE GREAT CAT'S TIP OF THE BLADE SHARP TIP OF THE PAIL OF SO CLOSE TO THE PANTHER'S EYES THAT IT BLURS.

ANOTHER SECOND, IT WILL BE THE LIGHT OUT OF THE EYE.

THAT'SSS THE THANKSSS I GET!

PERMANENTLY!



HE FORCES
HIS HEAD
TO THE
SIDE!

COWL AND
FLESH
SHRED
AS ONE
WITH
EQUAL
EASE.

CHINGGS



ZANTI
WOULD
SCOLD
HIM.

SNAR



I ALMOST ¹KILLED
THE ²WABBIT!

¹KILLED THE ²
WABBIT!



BLOOD SMEARS THE
CORNER OF HIS EYE.

IT IS LIKE VIEWING THE
WORLD THROUGH REDDISH
FILM; EVERY FIGURE AND
OBJECT BLOOD-SHAPED.

NOW, I ¹WILL KILL ²
THE WAAABIT!



WHAT IS HE HEAR-
ING? GORE SING-
ING SOME WAGNER-
IAN OPERA WITH
NONSENSE LYRICS
IN A SURPRISINGLY
STRONG AND STIR-
RING VOICE?



ALL OVER
IT'S FOR THE
WAAABIT

T'CHALLA CATCHES THE
WORD "KILL," BUT WHAT IS
GORE SINGING HE IS
GOING TO KILL?

SOMETHING HE CAN'T
UNDERSTAND, BUT
GORE IS DEFINITELY
NOT CLAIMING A
PANTHER OR GREAT
CAT.



DRROWN
THE
WABBIT

AND WHAT HAS
POSSESSED
HIM TO SING?



THE WATER FLOODS
THROUGH HIS COWL,
AND THE PANTHER HOLDS
IT TO HIS MOUTH AND
NOSTRILS--

--LIKE A WET LOVER
WITH LETHAL CARESSES.

SMOTHERING!



DON'T ASK ME HOW I
KNOW ALLA THIS... WE
ALL GOT OUR SECRETS.

BUT I GUESS A GOOD
PLACE TO START IS 'ROUND
MIDNIGHT IN THAT ALLEY
OFF O' 97TH STREET. NOW
MAYBE SHE WAS STALKIN'
'EM OR MAYBE SHE JUST
HEARD THE SCUFFLE...
I DON'T KNOW.

WHATEVER THE CAUSE,
SHE WAS THERE, JUMPIN'
OUTTA THE SHADOWS RIGHT
AT A PAIR O' WHAT
LOOKED LIKE YER STAN-
DARD SLIME-BUCKET
MUGGERS.

YEAH. HER--PATSY
WALKER. YOU KNOW,
THE

ENCOUNTER IN THE ALLEY OF DEATH



SPIT! SHE'S ONE OF THOSE SUPER-CLOWNS. DON'T MESS WITH HER!







IT DIDN'T TAKE
LONG FOR THAT
RECEIVER—OR
MAYBE IT WAS
HER CAT SENSES
—TO LEAD HER
TO THE
PHARMACEUTICAL
LAB THAT SHE
KNEW WAS SUP-
POSED TO BE
CLOSED FER
THE NIGHT.



THEN SHE
SAW THEM
—THE
STREET
PEOPLE.

THEY GOT NAMES,
BUT FOLKS JUST
CALL 'EM THAT...
OR THEY CALL
'EM THE
HOMELESS...
AND THERE ARE
SOME OTHER
FANCY NAMES FER
'EM, TOO. ME,
I JUST CALL
'EM PEOPLE.

HELLCAT KNEW
THEY WERE ACTIN'
WEIRD... Y'KNOW
—LIKE ZOMBIES
FROM ONE O'
THEM OLD
HORROR MOTION
PICTURES.



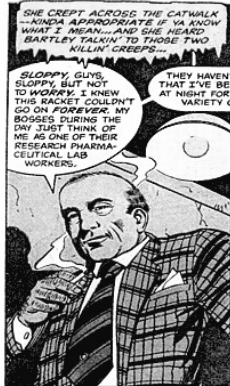
I DON'T
THINK IT
TOOK HER
MORE THAN
A SECOND
TO REALIZE
SOMETHIN'
WASN'T
TICKIN'
RIGHT.

LIKE THE CAT SHE IS, SHE
SCAMPERS INTO THE LAB
THROUGH THE SKYLIGHT.

FROM WHERE I WAS, I COULD
SEE HER, BUT I DIDN'T TAKE
NO NOTICE AT THE TIME.

—AND NEITHER DID
THAT DR. BARTLEY
IMBECILE. AND,
Y'KNOW, HE SHOULD
HAVE CAUSE HE WAS
THE BOSS, AFTER
ALL.

HELLCAT DIDN'T HAVE NO KINDA INKIN'
WHAT WAS COMIN' DOWN HERE... BUT SHE
FIGURED IF SHE LISTENED FER A TIME
WITHOUT BEIN' SEEN, SHE'D LEARN
SOON ENOUGH.





YOU'VE SHOT
ENOUGH
PEOPLE TONIGHT,
GUTLESS!

WHUP

SHUFFLE!



OKAY, STOP! THIS MIKE'S WHAT I
GIVE THOSE ZOMBIES DOWN THERE
THEIR ORDERS WITH.

THEIR WILL
POWER'S DRUGGED
OUT OF THEM. STOP
WHERE YOU ARE OR
ONE WORD FROM ME
AND THEY'LL TAKE A
COMMUNITY
SWIM IN THOSE
BOILING
VATS.



THAT'S BETTER, MOE
SAID YOU CARED
ABOUT THAT STREET
SCUM.

TIE HER TIGHT, BOYS,
THESE COSTUMED FREAKS
ARE ALL REGULAR
HOUDINIS!



OKAY, YOU PEOPLE
DOWN THERE, WRAP
IT UP. WE'RE CLOSING
DOWN SHOP--FOR
GOOD!

TOO BAD, LADY, IT LOOKS AS IF
YOU'RE GOING TO BE THE VICTIM
OF A DRUG OVERDOSE
ALONG WITH THE
REST OF THE
STREET SLIME
DOWN THERE.

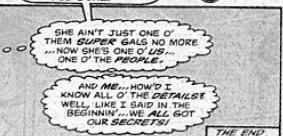


NOW ALL THE TIME
BARTLEY WAS YAKKIN',
THE HELLCAT WAS LOOKIN'
AROUND AND THINKIN'
HER WAY OUTTA
THIS FIX--IF YOU'LL
EXCUSE THE
EXPRESSION.

SHE HAD SNEAKED A BOOK O'
MATCHES FROM THE TRASH--
MADE SURE NO ONE WAS LOOKIN'
AT HER AND--

TM





AND ME... HOW'D I KNOW ALL O' THE DETAILS? WELL, LIKE I SAID IN THE BEGINNIN'... WE ALL GOT OUR SECRETS!

THE END.

MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS

Dear Presenters,

Concerning issue #27, the American Eagle was a solid enough story even if the plot was predictable. The main thing was the variety offered by the American Eagle's presence in this issue.

Havok, the lead feature, leaves me feeling a bit down, the art is superb but the thought of Havok risking life and limb over someone he knows so little about seems a bit far fetched.

The Black Panther story continues to hold me enthralled after 15 installments. You have to tell me, will the Panther be getting his own series when the current storyline finishes?

Coldblood is probably the best premiere series to hit this title. I had forgotten how much I have missed the team of Moench and Gulacy from their stint on the original Master of Kung Fu series way back when. Part two was enjoyable to my senses and it also served to dispel all my fears of a rip-off of the Deathlock series from years past.

I am still looking for the right mix that will give this title a true anthology feel. Be bold, run a few issues without a mutant tie, lead off with a Two Gun Kid western or a Dracula/horror melodrama experiment!

Before I go I just had to ask, since all of the popular monthly titles are biweekly for the summer will MCP go weekly?

Charles S. Novinsky
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Bite your tongue, Charles, and don't let Tom DeFalco hear you! We don't think any editor could handle a weekly schedule. Oh, except maybe the COMICS BUYER'S GUIDE's second best editor in comics today, Marvel's own Bob Harras. Now, some people say that the only reason he was chosen is because he's the editor of Marvel's most popular book, THE X-MEN. But we know the truth, it's because of his hard work and positive attitude! Take a bow, Bob, you really deserve it! (Yeah, right, sure he gets it! Not an office that does real work like us. Boy, some people get all the breaks. . .oh, er, guess we lost our heads, no offense, Bob???) Um, now on to the next letter, see you soon, Charles. . .

Dear Sirs,

I really enjoy MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS, but I think you're overusing the mutants. I think you should alternate the logo. For example, instead of saying MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS THE X-MEN'S HAVOK, you should say MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS COLDLOOD, or BLACK PANTHER. Anyway, I think it's good to have three ongoing series and a one-shot. The three ongoing series keep the continuity, and make people (like me) keep on buying the book. One shots are also good to

get lesser characters up there in the spotlight again. Keep up the good work.

Now, I have a few character suggestions: First, Firestar is my absolute favorite, but unused, character. I loved the few stories she's had in the past, and I'd really love to see her in MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS. I also think you should do a Spider-Woman story. I loved her in the Freedom Force, and think she'd make an excellent ongoing series here. Hey, how about Dagger, you've already had a Cloak story! What about a Paladin ongoing series written by Scott Lobdell? Please? How about a Black Cat story? I miss her! Please have a Freedom Force series too! They could almost be considered heroes. Finally, why don't you do a series on a Marvel villain. Villains are people too, you know!

Thank you for your time, and please consider my suggestions.

Jeff Hill
Lakeview, OR

AAAAAHHHHHHH!! We mean we'll try to, we mean we're going to, um, yeah, you'll see a lot of that stuff soon. . .

Dear Marvel,

After a year of MCP, it's high time I wrote. Overall, I've been pleased and also displeased. The biweekly schedule is just fine for this book. (The summertime biweeklyness of some of your other titles rubs me wrong, though, especially for one particular fellow with three titles already!) The eight page length is good only for perfectly paced stories, such as the current Black Panther epic. For most of the serials it is just too choppy, and for the one-parters, it's entirely too short. I strongly suggest cutting back to just three features, though I realize that three into thirty-two doesn't go.

As for the stories themselves, the X-Men serials have all been okay. The Wolverine story was enjoyable. Everything felt right and fit Logan well. Besides, John Buscema has been my favorite for years. Noco's Cokosus suffered both the virtues and vices characteristic of her writing. She tells a tale wonderfully, with feeling and often with insight. However, her characters routinely mouth Noco's opinions rather than their own. Not much to be said of the Cyclops yarn, though I enjoyed seeing the twisted, end-motivated morality of Master Mold pushed to its extreme. Too many persons hold to such pragmatic, or else to utilitarian moral standards, and they never see that true morality is deontological. It's too early to comment on the Havok story.

The other serials have been uniformly good. The realism of Shang-Chi brought back memories. Perhaps a revival is in order for that defunct title? Gerber's Man-Thing was done as only he can do it: excellently. But it was too tied up in recent political events for my taste. "Panther's Quest"—what can I say? This is so good. In contrast to the moralism of Noco, McGregor lets the story

the story draw its own moral. We see a complex story sympathetically treated through the eyes of all involved, both the "heroes" and the "villains". We are less quick to self-righteous condemnation, more apt to weep at the human condition; that of tragic existential reality. Mr. McGregor is to be commended, not to forget Gene Colan, another of my old favorites.

The shorter stories are usually forgotten with the turn of the page, except the Dr. Strange two-parter. Excellent, in some ways more so than the Panther story. The Sorcerer Supreme intervening for the sake of one man and his family. Comics can set a wholesome example.

Patrick Guthrie
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Very true, Patrick, thanks for your comments.

Dear Marvel Readers Present:

MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #28—Havok—good story and art. Really interesting. I hope Plasma isn't really Lela. That would be a problem.

Black Panther—Good story, decent art. Very interesting. It's too bad the kid had to die. But then there are always innocents caught in the midst of wars.

Coldblood—Great story, good art. I really like it. And now that he has some information about his past, maybe we'll get to know more about him and Gina.

Triton—Decent story, good art. The last panel was good. Roxon strikes again. I wonder how many containers like that are in the Earth's oceans. Some real interesting stories could come out of that.

MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #29—Twenty-nine issues after he started off this comic, Wolverine is back. Great! And he is with Havok! Sort of like the MELTDOWN gig, only not so much intrigue.

The story was really good as was the art. I can't wait to see Havok and Wolverine working together next issue. It should be great!

This Black Panther story is really dragging along. A lot has happened, but it has had a great many gap issues, such as this issue and some of the last. It still isn't bad though.

Coldblood is getting better and better. Now he is in Las Vegas fighting a pursuit robot. Hopefully he'll access his memories soon.

The Quasar story was pretty good. I enjoyed seeing Jennifer Kale again. I'd like to see her get a multi-issue story in this book sometime in the future.

Shane Hutchison
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Thanks for all of your comments, Shane. We know for a fact that there are no plans for a Jennifer Kale saga in the future. But now, with this new found support, maybe there can be one! Only time will tell. . .

HELLCAT
FIGHTS FOR THE
HOMELESS!



**BLACK
PANTHER**

**DOUBLE-SIZED
BATTLE CHAPTER!**

